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AUTHOR Mokler, Mary M.; Hernandez, Francisca
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ABSTRACT

This is an external evaluation of the "Career Education and High School Completion Project for Girls and Young Women" at the Crownpoint (New Mexico) Institute of Technology (CIT). The project, funded by the federal Women's Educational Equity Act Program (WEEAP), targeted primarily Navajo females age 18 and under in grades 7 through 12 who were dropouts or at risk of dropping out of schools near Crownpoint. The evaluation includes a description of the CIT WEEAP project and a discussion of its successes and failures. While winning praise for its innovative concept, the evaluation states that planning and strategies for carrying out the concept were not well-articulated. It points out that funding for the project came during summer, perhaps contributing to a lack of involvement by the local community and target population. The document compares local dropout statistics with similar data at the Navajo, New Mexico, and national levels. The paper concludes that the problems faced by Navajos are not too different from those faced by other minorities in New Mexico or the United States but, as a closed society, the Navajos have a better opportunity to change their circumstances. The report discusses the pregnancy-related dropout problem among young minority women in terms of class differences and power relationships. There are also some general recommendations for minimizing the factors that lead to dropping out and for improving data-gathering procedures. Finally, there are suggestions and references to others' experiences to be used in building a more effective program. A five-page reference list is provided. (TES)

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DOING SOMETHING ABOUT YOUNG NAVAJO WOMEN WHO ARE SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Evaluation of a project funded by the Women's Educational Equity Act Program at the Crownpoint Institute of Technology

Mary M. Mokler and Francisca Hernandez
Mokler Associates
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December, 1987

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DOING SOMETHING ABOUT YOUNG NAVAJO WOMEN WHO ARE SCHOOL DROPOUTS

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INTRODUCTION

What the Project was. In October, 1986, a project began at the Crownpoint Institute of Technology that had the potential of producing positive changes in the relationship between area schools and young Navajo women who dropped out of them. The project was titled "Career Education and High School Completion Project for Girls and Young Women". It targeted the females (primarily Navajo) age 18 or under in grades 7 through 12 who were dropouts or at risk of being dropouts from the schools near Crownpoint, NM. The project was funded from 10/1/86 until 9/30/87 by the federal Women's Educational Equity Act Program.

Because the project funding did not coincide with the school year, the measurable objectives of the project had to be adjusted to fit the funding schedule. Success in reaching those immediate objectives was evaluated by CIT's WEEAP project director at the end of the project.

What the external evaluation is. The evaluation by an outside source builds on the information generated by the "internal" evaluation by the project director. By and large, our evaluation weaves information from various sources together to analyze the issues raised by the project.

CIT contracted with us to evaluate the project "externally " as stated in the project grant. We, the evaluators, are women who are neither part of the communities involved nor of the CIT staff. Our backgrounds, which are no doubt relevant to the way we understand the project, are a) a developmental psychologist involved in education who was raised speaking English and b) an educator and social scientist whose first language is Spanish.

Contents of the Evaluation. First we present a description of the CIT WEEAP project and how it worked and did not work. Recommendations for CIT follow. Then we compare the local picture of school drop outs with the total Navajo, New Mexico, and national pictures. We include a social analysis of what this means for young minority women. There are general recommendations for improvement of the situations which lead to school dropout. Finally there are suggestions and references to others' experiences to be used in building a more effective model.

THE CIT WEEAP PROJECT

Description

Mission. It is our impression that the mission was to improve the preparation of young women to be part of a Navajo society which controls its own reservation's economic growth and resource development. (see Proposal, p. 3).

The long-range goal of the project was stated in the proposal as follows: "...To provide at risk [for school dropout] girls and young women the opportunity for productive employment and/or further vocational or academic training that will enable them to become self sufficient and productive members of the contemporary bi-culture Navajo community and economy." (p.7)

Goals and Objectives. The mission of the project was discussed in the proposal for funding initially submitted at the end of the 1985-86 school year. The funding, and therefore the grant activities, actually did not begin until well after the start of the next school year. The objectives listed below are those adjusted to what might be accomplished from October through September.

Goal I: to reduce the amount of actual school drop out in the target population.
Objective 1: "70% of dropout clientele contacted during the 1986-87 School year will complete 87' Spring semester."
Objective 2: "5 of 7 seniors currently in the program will receive a High School diploma."
Objective 3: "The Program will reduce the 1987 dropout rate for young females by 50%."
Objective 4: "80% of contacted/counselled students with identifiable habit patterns, and considered to be 'at risk' candidates will re-enroll in respective schools."

Goal II: to address in a positive way specific problems suspected to exist in the target population.
Objective 1: "60 students with poor attendance habits will be contacted and counselled."
Objective 2: "10% of clientele will be referred to Navajo Juvenile Authorities as a 'last resort'".
Objective 3: "100% of contacted/counselled clientele will be made aware of services other than WEEAP that are available to assist in coping with pregnancy, child care, substance abuse and related problems."
Objective 4: 80% of contacted young females will acknowledge a more positive attitude toward school and counselling."
Objective 5: "An advisory group consisting of Counselors from each member school will be formulated."

Goal III: to have community and parental involvement.
Objective 1: "Positive advertising concerning truancy, absenteeism and community concerns for education will be developed and distributed."

Objective 2: "Each initial contact with clientele will include a parent/guardian."

Objective 3: "90% of students and parents referred to the program by agencies will be personally contacted at their homes."

What made the project special. The project was special because it concerned minority females in a rural area, because the staff were "third party advocates", that is, were not an immediate part of the school system, and because the project was focused on giving direct services to its target population. The proposal for the CIT WEEAP project was built from experience gathered in an earlier project, CIT's High School Intervention and Drop out Prevention Project for 1985-86 (funded by USDOE Title IVB FY '85). The new project was written to concentrate on women because, during the 1985-86 project, 55% of all students currently not in schools were female.

Who was involved.

The target population. The objectives include several groups of people as targets of the project.

a. Girls and young women who were actual or potential dropouts from schools in the area around Crownpoint, New Mexico, and were age 18 or under and in grades 7 to 12.

b. Their parents and community, including the schools.

Project Management.

a. The host and facilitator of the project was the Crownpoint Institute of Technology (formerly Navajo Skill Center). It is a vocational education institution and a "Tribal Organization" of the Navajo Tribe.

b. The project staff changed during the year and basically consisted of two different sets of people with only slight overlap. All were part of the Crownpoint community. The initial group, who worked through the school year, had a Navajo male and Navajo female counselor and a white male director who knew the people of the area and the educational system. All members of the second group, assembled for the summer months, were Navajo and women. Many had an understanding of literacy and difficulty in school because they taught during the school year and were involved in Special Education.

Evaluation

What about the Project worked. The CIT project was an innovative, enterprising and well thought through approach to the dropout "problem" with young Navajo women. It was based on previous experience with a local project (addressing the general dropout problem, see reference to CIT, 1986) as well as on a literature review. Figure I lists the tasks actually addressed by the project and the final workable strategies used. The information for this figure comes from interviews with the staff and from the final written report by the project director (CIT,

1987).

Figure I: What Worked
CIT WEEAP Project

Task	Strategies that worked
1.Discovering and contacting the right clients.	a.Referrals from many sources: schools and other agencies, parents, girls, etc. When there was concern for lack of confidentiality: "If we couldn't get to these records and answers we just asked questions about their school and attempted to develop an appropriate plan for them." (CIT, 1987, p.4). b.Going to the home. c.Because distance, transportation, weather, family wariness could prevent hogan contact, initial approach was sometimes through other means: group meetings at Chapter houses, CHRs. "Often the client would not identify herself because other agencies have been looking for her or her parents.(bill collectors, social welfare agency, etc.)" (CIT, 1987,p. 6). d.When time was too short, adjusted staff and schedule. Hired more people to do the outreach. "Left early in the day to catch parents and clients." (CIT,1987,p.10).
2.Involving clients in WEEAP.	a.Reached out to clients at home rather than making them come to the office. b.Remained focused on service. "We assured the clients and parents that we were here to help them and try to counsel them at the hogan level. We listened more than talked and let the clients know that we realized the difficulties and were available to them at any time to the week."(CIT,1987, p.5)
3.Getting clients to stay in or return to school.	a.Were "third-party advocates." b.With family and school,

	worked around individual's difficulties such as need for child care. Emphasized alternatives acceptable in that community. c. Worked on communication breakdowns between school, family and student. "When school counselors did not want to form Advisory group, we worked with individual Counselors at their own schools, assisting them in contacting the list of girls they gave to us." (CIT, 1987, p.8).
4. Considering all aspects of the problem.	a.Referred girls to other agencies as needed, such a WIC. b.Took bilingual/bicultural approach. "Another problem was Navajo language, since counselors are new to the reservation and did not understand how to ask questions so they could be properly understood."(CIT, 1987, p.3).
5. Identifying dropouts early.	a.Targeted girls from 7th grade and on. b.Attention to early signs reported: absenteeism, alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancy and parenthood. b.Raising awareness of early signs with cooperating agencies and in the general community.
6.Having community involvement.	a.Positive advertising: brochures, signs in Chapter Houses, spreading the word through other agencies. b.Providing workshops open to the community such as on learning disabilities and reading. c.Visits at home so that parent or guaridan would be included in the problem and solution.

What did not work and why. Although the CIT project represents an innovative concept, the overall plan and specific strategies to carry out the idea were not articulated well. This made it difficult for the staff in charge of implementation to understand what needed to be done and how to accomplish those tasks. Nonetheless, the staff often made the project work anyway, working out solutions to problems when they could (much of this is reflected in Figure I). Hence, most of the 12 specific objectives listed above were fulfilled (see performance report written at the grant's end, CIT, 1987).

One objective not fulfilled was "The Project will reduce the 1987 dropout rate for young females by 50%" (Goal I, Objective 3). Since the figures necessary to determine whether the dropout rate was reduced or not were never made available, we cannot measure success of this objective in any empirical way. The final report for the project did not include any figures and it appears that appropriate records were not kept.

Another deficiency was that the project did not create a mechanism that could stop or reduce school dropout from happening in the future. It does, however, provide some information that could help generate more effective action toward intervention with girls and young women at risk of dropping out.

We suspect that the reason for these deficiencies is deep. There was no social consciousness about the position of children and especially female children in the community, the value of education for these young women and the importance of females acquiring the same knowledge and understanding they wish for males. Therefore the passion and motivation for helping the females succeed was not there except perhaps in the summer months. The commitment to these young women's education was not there.

In all fairness to the people who tried to make the project work, we must add that the timing and pacing of the grant was inappropriate. It did not synchronize with the school year. This was complicated by the fact that the needed transportation facilities were not made available. Because of the long distances, the impassable roads during much of the winter and spring, and the inclement weather, it was extremely difficult to get to the students as the project had proposed to do.

Recommendations

1. **Include the Differences of Women.** Plan any new projects dealing with young women only after the questions have been answered, "In terms of school dropouts, are there important differences between our young men and young women? What are those differences?"

One marked difference is that females are the ones that become pregnant, and becoming pregnant happens a lot. In the study,

Navajo Students at Risk, there was no significant difference between the likelihood of males or females dropping out (p. 110). Certainly both boys and girls can be parents. Yet schoolage pregnancy may be a gender based manifestation of the general problem of alienation dsicussed at length in the section below (Comparisons with Dropouts Elsewhere). Dropping out of school to get a job, typically male, is also a gender based reason for drop outs. Both types of behavior, schoolage pregnancy and dropping out to take a job, exist among almost all groups of people and not only the Navajo. (See Mokler, 1986).

Instead of being an expression of alienation, schoolage pregnancy may be the expression of other motivations. Examples are wanting a baby as something to cuddle, of wanting to hold on to a boyfriend through having sex or a baby, and of feeling that becoming a mother now is an expected and comfortable role. Lack of "sex education" is not usually a factor although education about making choices may be (see reference list for curricula).

Whatever the reason for becoming pregnant, young women in school do not have an easy time being pregnant or a parent, either as individuals or as part of the social picture. As Charlotte Bunch says, "The high incidence of teenage pregnancy in the United States reflects the sexual confusion and conflicts faced by out children today and particularly discrimination and double standards that girls encounter. For young Navajo women, some conflicting messages have to do with the change of woman's role as Navajos blend with the culture of the cities and "white" ways of life. For many years, Navajos put women in charge of economic matters such as grazing rights, have handed down clan identity through women, and have lived where the mother's family lived. As traditional and white society blend, however, woman's role becomes confused (see Lamphere and Conte).

2. **Involve Women More.** (a) Have the counsellors be women. One of the observations made, both in the project's final report and by the evaluators, is that the young Navajo women at risk responded better to the female staff. (b) Build a mentoring program. In essence, this was what was started during the summer months of the CIT WEEAP project when mature women were the counselors, advocates, and advisors of younger women.

3. **Incorporate the Recommendations.** CIT should use the recommendations in its ongoing program about school dropouts.

4. **Disseminate the Model.** The greatest value of the CIT WEEAP project, in our opinion, is the information it provides towards building further effective action in doing something about young women who are school dropouts. CIT can use the information but should see that it gets to other people who can use it. The original proposal for the WEEAP grant stated that it was a project goal to provide a "tested, replicaable model that can be adopted in the numerous rural Indian and non-Indian settings which exhibit similar drop-out syndromes involving girls and young women" (CIT 1986-b, p. 5).

COMPARISONS WITH DROPOUTS ELSEWHERE

The National Picture

According to a study completed in 1986 by the General Accounting Office, there is a significantly higher dropout rate for women and minorities than for whites in general in the United States. The study reports that as a whole youth drop out of school for family, school and work related reasons. Among the most powerful predictors for dropping out is being behind grade level.

The GAO study reveals the following reasons for leaving school: poor grades, not liking school, marriage or marriage plans, pregnancy and preference or need for work. However, "self-reporting', says the study, is affected by the youth's perceptions of their circumstances and they may report inaccurately. Other reasons given were: "school was not for me"; "was expelled or suspended;" "school grounds too dangerous;" "did not get into desired program"; "could not get along with teachers'" "had to support the family;" "friends were dropping out"; "could not get along with students;""wanted to enter the military;" "offered job and chose to work."

A study conducted by Michael E. Borus and Susan A. Carpenter showed that the following were significant correlates of dropping out:

being two or more years behind grade level;
being pregnant;
coming from a household where mother or father were not in the home when the child was 14.
coming from a home where the father had dropped out of school;
having relatively little knowledge of the labor market.

Borus and Carpenter also found that youth are more likely to stay in school if

they are enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum;
they are satisfied with school;
they do not intend to marry within 5 years;
they expect to attend college;
they have more religious attendance.

Minorities who do not come from poverty stricken homes or have fathers with low educational levels are more likely to stay in school than white youth of similar conditions.

The GAO study also pointed out that dropouts employed in 1985 were in lower skilled jobs than were high school graduates. Among the employed male dropouts age 16-24, about two fifths were working as machine operators, fabricators and laborers and about one sixth were in service jobs. Only 8% were in technical, sales, and administrative support positions. Most female dropouts were working in service occupations and as machine operators, fabricators and laborers.

The unemployment rate for minority youth has risen since 1950 and continues to do so. For example, in 1972 the unemployment rate for black youth was 35%, but by 1986 it had risen to 43%. For their white counterparts, the unemployment rate for the same years was 14% and 16% respectively.

The gap has widened between whites and minorities in terms of labor force participation as well. Because of this low participation and the high unemployment, many of these young people reach adulthood with little or no work experience.

This situation has both adverse costs to the individual and to society. Many of the social costs, as defined by our leaders, include welfare burdens, crime and poor health.

Many dropout programs have been undertaken as remedies, yet still the experts say they don't know what works in terms of prevention or intervention with youth at risk or to insure re-entry.

This situation translates into a serious national problem. Research has revealed that nearly 1/3 of the US population is illiterate or semi-illiterate. 25 million people can't read at all; 35 million read only at a level below the needs of the society. Though the largest number of illiterates are white, native- born Americans, in proportion to the population the figures are higher for Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans (Kozol, 1985).

85% of juveniles before the courts are illiterate or semi-illiterate. Over one third of mothers who receive support from welfare are functionally illiterate.

One of the classic responses when faced with this kind of problem is to say, "We don't know enough," "we need more research, " "we are not just sure," and "we don't know what works". This false humility is self-serving. Even when credible expensive research has been done, we keep redoing the studies.

This national reality contains the state picture we are about to reveal.

The New Mexico Picture

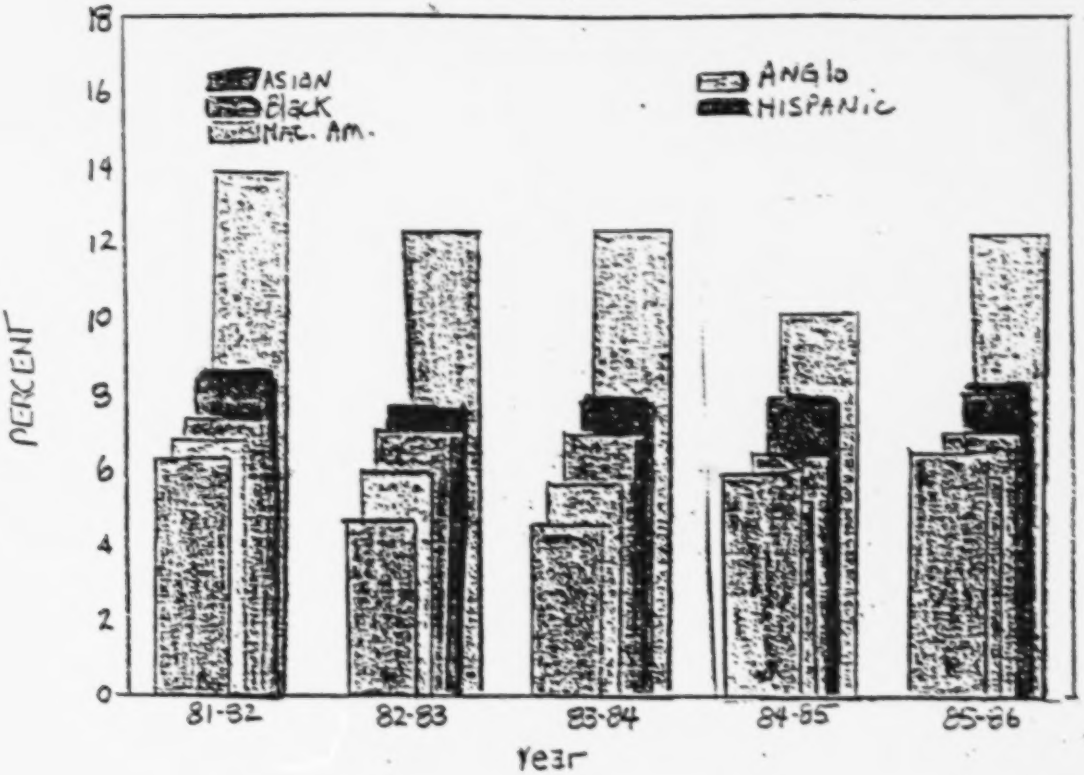
In New Mexico during 1985-86, the biggest dropout rate occurred among Native Americans. Consistently this population has the highest dropout rate. Hispanics follow, then Blacks, followed by Asians while the Anglos have the lowest rate (see Table I). This pattern correlates directly with poverty and other socioeconomic indicators.

28.7% of students in New Mexico dropped out of school during the four year period 1982-86 (see Table II and reference of the Coalition for Children, 1987). 5,978 students dropped out in the

Table I

New Mexico

Dropout Rates by Ethnicity by Year



DROPOUT RATES BY ETHNICITY AND YEAR

YEAR		1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
ETHNICITY	ASIAN	6.3	4.6	4.6	5.9	6.4
	ANGLO	6.8	5.9	5.7	5.2	5.8
	BLACK	7.3	7.0	7.0	6.4	7.0
	HISP.	8.4	7.6	7.9	7.8	8.1
	NAT. AM.	13.8	12.3	12.9	10.2	12.2

Topic E

DETAILS OF NEW MEXICO DROPOUT POPULATION

DROPOUT RATES BY ETHNICITY 1982-1986

	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	4YR Total
Asian	4.6%	4.6%	5.9%	6.4%	21.5%
Anglo	5.9%	5.7%	5.2%	5.8%	22.6%
Black	7.0%	7.0%	6.4%	7.0%	27.4%
Hispanic	7.6%	7.0%	6.4%	7.0%	31.4%
Native American	12.3%	12.3%	10.2%	12.2%	47.0%

DROPOUT RATES BY GRADE AND ETHNICITY 1985-1986

	Asian	Anglo	Hispanic	Black	Native American
9th	4.7%	3.7%	5.9%	6.4%	13.6%
10th	6.9%	6.1%	10.4%	5.8%	11.3%
11th	8.2%	7.5%	9.7%	8.8%	12.4%
12th	5.7%	6.3%	6.7%	7.4%	10.8%

DROPOUT RATE BY CAUSE AND ETHNICITY 1985-86

	Asian	Anglo	Hispanic	Black	Native American
Motivation	35.6%	38.0%	36.4%	37.3%	31.1%
Discipline	4.4%	10.3%	15.2%	4.2%	17.9%
Enrollment	44.4%	19.9%	16.8%	20.4%	9.0%
Home	6.7%	12.0%	12.5%	14.4%	15.8%
Preg/Marriage	0	6.8%	7.1%	6.8%	8.2%
Other	8.9%	13.0%	12.0%	16.9%	18.0%

From Coalition for Childeren, Kids in Crsis : New Mexico's Other Bomb.

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state during 1985-86 school year. 53.8% of them were males and 46.2% were females (see Tables III and IV and reference of the New Mexico State Department of Education, 1986).

Though males tend to drop out of school proportionally more than females, there has been a large increase in the rate of dropouts among female students (see NM State Department of Education, 1986). This increase is directly related to the increase in adolescent pregnancy.

New Mexico has the twelth biggest dropout rate in the nation. Consistently it is the poor and minorities who are the most likely to drop out. The relationship between this situation and employment in New Mexico follows the national pattern. Less than 40% of all poor high school dropouts ages 15-21 were employed in 1965 and only 20% managed to find full time work (see New Mexico Employment Security Department, 1986).

As long as we look at the dropout problem in isolation, we won't be able to understand it or solve it. Dropping out of school is only part of a more complex situation facing a large portion of our youth. This situation is not a matter only of schooling and children, but of families and overall social conditions. Poverty, health related issues such as accidents, suicide, homicide, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, and alienation are all manifestations of the same problem or of deeper and wider conditions affecting a large segment of our society.

The overall school performance of our students points to causes beyond what we often describe in reports and evaluations. Tables V and VI clearly indicate the correlation between ethnicity and school performance. Yet the consistent social stratification that emerges when test scores and other problems affecting youth are presented graphically are indicative of causes that, though including ethnicity, go beyond it. These configurations emerge over and over again regardless of what specific problem we are addressing. Tables VII through X clearly support this statement.

The effects of poverty and discrimination on children and the difficulty our institutions have in guiding our children through their growth keeps us constantly busy, but we don't seem to be able to figure out what works toward a true resolution. We continue to provide programs, services and all types of public support for children, yet we are unwilling or unable to reform the condition for adults. Without addressing these adults' circumstances, we can't remedy the problems of children.

Schools and other children's institutions have been made responsible for creating a just and equitable society from one riddled with inequities. Is that a realistic expectation? The advantage of social class and position carry over to the neighborhood school and on into the future and its range of opportunities. It is as understandable as unfair that those who start ahead finish ahead.

Table III

Dropout Data for the 1985-86 School Year

Group	Number of Dropouts	180-Day Membership	Dropout Rate
Ethnicity			
Anglo	2,171	35,164	5.8
Hispanic	2,663	30,037	8.1
Nat American	981	7,070	12.2
Black	118	1,577	7.0
Asian	45	658	8.4
Sex			
Male	3,220	38,218	7.8
Female	2,758	36,288	7.1
Grade			
9	1,300	21,167	5.8
10	1819	20,041	8.3
11	1679	17,294	8.9
12	1,180	16,004	6.9
TOTAL	5,979	74,506	7.4

New Mexico State Department
of Education
1986

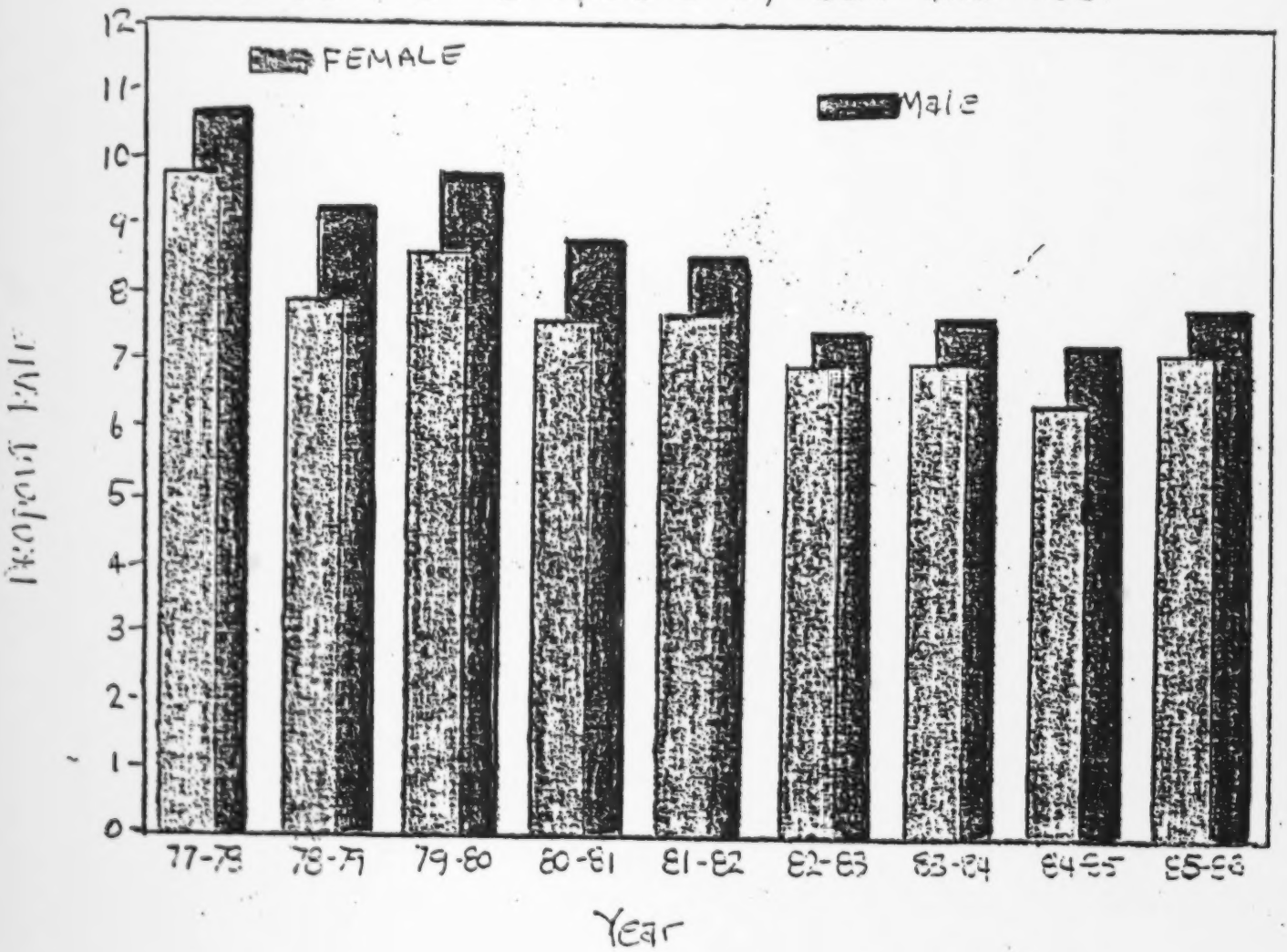
Table IV

New Mexico
DROPOUT RATE BY YEAR AND SEX

Year

	77-78	78-79	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86
FEMALE	9.8	7.9	8.6	7.6	7.7	7.0	7.0	6.4	7.1
MALE	10.6	9.3	9.8	8.8	8.5	7.4	7.6	7.2	7.8

Percent of Dropouts by Sex and Year



New Mexico Dropout Study
Department of Education
1986

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Table V

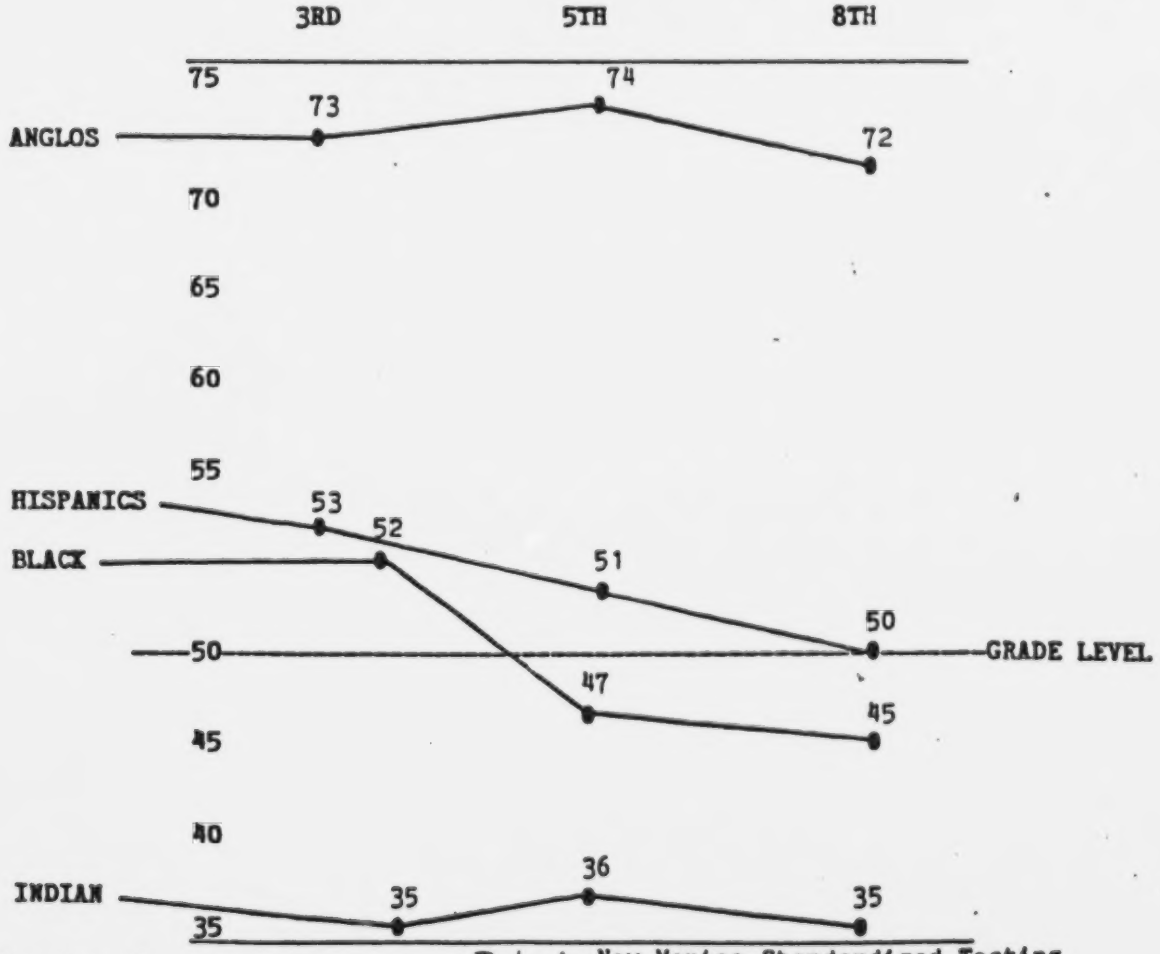
STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES REVEAL DISTURBING PATTERNS

In the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, New Mexico's children as a whole test at or above the national average. The statewide results for the 58,856 students in the 3rd, 5th & 8th grade who took the test in March of 1986 reflect improvement in almost every subtest as indicated below.

	# areas improved	# areas no change	# areas decrease
grade 3	13	1	0
grade 5	14	0	0
grade 8	12	2	0

THE GENERAL PATTERNS OF POOR PERFORMANCE BY THE ETHNIC MINORITIES OF NEW MEXICO, AND THE DECLINES IN SCORES AND/OR LACK OF PROGRESS OF ALL STUDENTS OVER TIME IS VERY DISTURBING.

CTBS TOTAL BATTERY SCORES
ETHNIC GROUPS FROM THIRD TO EIGHTH GRADE



Graphs: Coalition for Children, Kids in Crisis: New Mexico's Other Bomb Albuquerque NM 1987

Data: New Mexico Standardized Testing Program Report, 1985-86 School Year, N.M. State Department of Education

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ANALYSIS OF TEST SCORES REVEALS A SERIOUS RATE OF ACADEMIC DEFICIENCY AMONG NEARLY HALF OF NEW MEXICO'S CHILDREN.

TABLE VI

42.5% of 3rd graders
44.9% of 5th graders
46.4% of 8th graders
SCORED BELOW GRADE LEVEL IN 1986

Differences in the performance level of various ethnic groups within our state must be addressed as an immediate priority.*

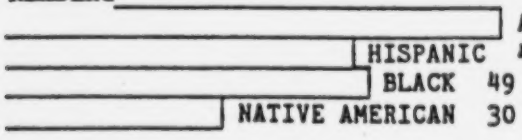
TOTAL BATTERY AVERAGES BY GRADE AND ETHNIC GROUP

	THIRD GRADE			FOURTH GRADE			EIGHTH GRADE		
	TOP 1/4	BOTTOM 1/4	GRADE LEVEL +	TOP 1/4	BOTTOM 1/4	GRADE LEVEL +	TOP 1/4	BOTTOM 1/4	GRADE LEVEL +
ANGLO	42.8%	7.0%	73.1%	42.0%	6.7%	72.6%	45.4%	7.2%	73.5%
ASIAN	41.7%	13.7%	69.8%	42.7%	6.5%	68.5%	44.9%	12.0%	73.6%
HISPANIC	20.5%	18.6%	47.8%	15.5%	18.4%	44.9%	17.2%	20.6%	42.9%
BLACK	20.2%	21.7%	44.8%	16.2%	20.3%	46.0%	15.3%	24.9%	41.3%
INDIAN	9.4%	31.8%	29.0%	6.4%	34.7%	24.7%	6.6%	36.7%	22.3%

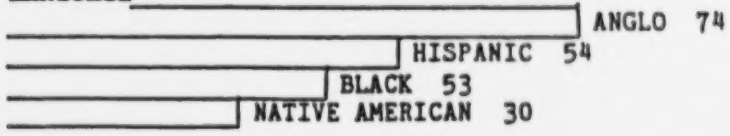
This chart compares the percentage of students in each ethnic group who score in the top and bottom quartiles of the test and the percentage that score at or above grade level (50% or better).

THE FOLLOWING SUBTEST SCORES AT THE THRID GRADE LEVEL ARE INDICATIVE OF THE PATTERN IN OTHER GRADES TESTED.

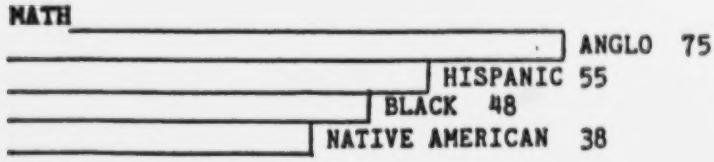
READING



LANGUAGE



MATH



*NOTE: It is far too simplistic to say that educational outcomes may be predicted by ethnic background. The outcomes could as easily be tied to economic wellbeing which is in fact a better indicator. Thus, in general terms, the poorer a student is the more likely it is that s/he will perform poorly.

Graphs/Analysis: Coalition for Children: Kids In Crisis: New Mexico's Other Bomb.

Data Source: Analysis of State Department of Education CTBS printouts

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Table VII

PERCENT OF DEATHS BY CAUSE IN VARIOUS AGE AND ETHNIC GROUPINGS

			NEW MEXICO		
	U.S.	N.M.	HISPANIC	INDIAN	BLACK
UNDER 1 YEAR					
ABSOLUTE RATE/100,000	1207.3	1024.2	952	1191.5	1568
perinatal mortality	49.7%	37.8%	40.8%	26.0%	46.4%
cong. anomalies	20.6	23.4	22.2	29.4	14.3
SIDS	12.2	16.3	14.3	8.4	17.9
all accidents	2.3	4.2	3.8	8.4	3.6
influenza/pneumonia	1.9	2.5			
homicide	0.8			.84	7.1
AGES 1-4					
ABSOLUTE RATE/100,000	60.2	72.6	62.6	101.6	115.4
accidents	39.0%	44.5%	49.5%	50.0%	57.1%
cong. anomalies	12.5	8.4	9.1	2.9	
malignancy	8.1	5.3	3.8	2.9	
homicide	4.3	4.9	3.8	2.9	14.3
cirrhosis					14.3
AGES 5-14					
ABSOLUTE RATE/100,000	29.4	31.0	30.0	44.5	13.9
accidents	48.3%	54.5%	52.0%	54.2%	100.%
malignancy	13.9	11.0	16.0	2.9	
cong. anomalies	5.4	2.9	2.3	2.9	
homicide	4.4	3.2	5.3	2.9	
suicide	1.7	5.8	3.3	5.6	
AGES 15-24					
ABSOLUTE RATE/100,000	107.0	137.0	144.0	269.5	69.0
accidents	52.3%	55.5%	52.2%	62.0%	7.8%
homicide	13.7	9.7	8.7	10.0	62.2
suicide	11.5	17.9	19.9	14.4	7.8
malignancy	5.3	3.4	3.6	1.4	
heart disease	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.4	7.8
cong. anomalies	1.3	1.1	0.8		
alcoholism				2.9	

1984 New Mexico Selected Health Statistics, HED

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Table VIII

AMONG CHILDREN

AGE AND RACE ARE KEY VARIABLES IN ACCIDENT RELATED DEATHS

AGE SPECIFIC DEATH RATES PER 100,000

	ALL ACCIDENTS	MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS
UNITED STATES		
AGES: 1-4	28.0	8.4
5-14	19.3	9.7
15-24	87.2	62.2
NEW MEXICO		
ALL RACES		
AGES: 1-4	41.3	16.8
5-14	22.6	13.7
15-24	122.1	91.5
NON-HISPANIC WHITE		
AGES: 1-4	32.4	10.2
5-14	23.1	16.5
15-24	96.7	71.1
HISPANIC		
AGES: 1-4	41.8	20.9
5-14	20.5	11.5
15-24	126.1	95.1
NATIVE AMERICAN		
AGES: 1-4	65.6	23.9
5-14	33.3	12.8
15-24	282.2	214.4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS THAT ARE OFTEN A PART OF POOR PEOPLE'S LIVES, AND BEHAVIORAL FACTORS SUCH AS ALCOHOL ABUSE ARE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTORS TO ACCIDENTS OF ALL KINDS.

SOURCES: NM TRAFFIC ACCIDENT DATA, 1985
NM TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

NM SELECTED HEALTH STATISTICS,
ANNUAL REPORT, 1984
HED HEALTH STATISTICS BUREAU

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Table IX

SUICIDE CLAIMED THE LIVES OF MORE THAN TWICE AS MANY YOUNG NEW MEXICAN'S IN THE 1980'S AS IT DID IN THE 1960'S

While suicide rates across the nation have demonstrated alarming increases during the past twenty years, **rates in our state significantly exceed national averages.**

The largest increase has occurred among 15-19 year olds. 128 young people in this age group took their lives between 1980 and 1984. 86% of them were males.

The male/female ratio in 1980-84 shows variations among ethnic groups.

Male/Female Ratios

AGE	Indian	Anglo	Hispanic
15-19	7.8/1	6.5/1	5.3/1
20-24	102/0	2.7/1	9.1/1

When comparing a six year period in the 1960's with a four year period in the 1980's, **INCREASES in suicide rates for 15-24 year olds are found to be the highest among HISPANICS.** 7 Hispanic young people took their lives in the period examined in the '60's compared to 17 in the '80's period.

	INCREASE
MALES	
HISPANIC	124%
NATIVE AMERICAN	63%
ANGLO	81%
FEMALES	
HISPANIC	214%
NATIVE AMERICAN	slight decrease
ANGLO	7%

HIGHEST SUICIDE RATES in New Mexico are among young, Native American males.

MALES 15-24	# PER 100,000
NATIVE AMERICAN	79
HISPANIC	35.1
ANGLOS	28.1

Sheline, J.L., et al, "Suicide in New Mexico: A Growing Problem In The Young and Minorities", 1987, Data quoted with permission of the authors.

Table 2

NEW MEXICO'S DEATH RATE FROM ALCOHOLISM AND ALCOHOL ABUSE WAS 180% OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN 1984

Death from alcoholism and alcohol abuse is severe among New Mexico's youth.

AMONG 15-24 YEAR OLDS:

The rate for Native Americans is 50 times higher than the Anglo rate

The rate for Hispanics is 5 times higher than the Anglo rate

ALCOHOL PLAYED A PART IN AT LEAST:

46% of all suicides

51% of all homicides

64% of all fatal accidents

62% of drivers 16-19 years old killed in auto accidents had detectable blood alcohol levels

46 % of clients seen in state funded community substance abuse treatment programs during 85-86 were under 18 years of age

"Concerning Facts About Mental Health and Drug Abuse Issues for New Mexico's Youth", 1987 Drug Abuse Bureau, HED

The WEEA Project in Crownpoint is one of the most aggressive and well thought through short term approaches to addressing the dropout problem we have encountered. Because of the homogeneity of the population, the plan has all the ingredients for short term success. Yet, the question remains, why didn't it work?

The impact of inequality transcends the local community. We are one nation. Education is not a state or local matter. Tests are national in use and publication. Test scores are computed on a national curve. Children are slotted at national norms, below or above those national norms. Textbooks are national. They are produced, marketed and derive great profits from national acceptance. Teachers are trained in a nationally homogenized curriculum by uniform and national criteria. The Navajo are not only citizens of Windowrock or Crownpoint but of the US. These facts have implications beyond Crownpoint or the Navajo Reservation or the State of New Mexico. Dropping out of school in Crownpoint has its roots beyond Crownpoint.

The Navajo Picture

When we turn to the more specific situation of the Navajo Nation, the picture does not change much; it only intensifies. In 1973, the United States Commission on Civil Rights held hearings in Window Rock and found that most adult Navajos have completed five years of school as compared to 12 years for the overall population. Those over 50 most likely have never attended school and 80% of those over 25 do not have a high school diploma.

It is, however, performance level rather than years of schooling that determines literacy. It requires 9th grade level to understand instructions on a bottle of house cleanser, 10th grade level to understand instructions of the federal income tax form and 12th grade level to read a life insurance form. "At grade level" does not refer to a person who "sat it out" for 5 or even 12 years of school. It refers to those who can do what those who master the objectives of a specific grade in excellent schools can do, and not what they are certified through a diploma or a report card to have attempted. Therefore, grade completion levels do not determine literacy levels. Those who have completed grade levels without reaching the degree of literacy necessary to participate in the social and commercial process of our society are excluded or left behind or out. We are surrounded and conditioned by a print reality and those who are skilled control the determinants of our existence.

What does this mean to the large number of dropouts among the Navajos? The dropout rate has been estimated to be anywhere between 30% and 60%. The official rate is 31%. That is nearly one third of the student population.

The profile of the Navajo school dropout is outlined below. The statistics here come from the *Navajo Students at Risk* by Platero

et al.

A. THEIR FAMILIES

1. Dropouts are more likely to come from families who participate in welfare programs.
2. 45.1% of dropouts live with both parents while 27.2% live in dormitories. This contrasts with 60.8% of those who remain in school live with their parents, while only 10.2% stay in school dormitories.
3. 82.6% of those who stay in school are encouraged by their parents but only 56.7% of the dropouts said they were encouraged by their parents.
4. 50.9% of those who stayed in school had working mothers and 62.5% had working fathers. However only 27.8% of the dropouts had working mothers and 42.5% had working fathers.
5. A larger proportion of dropouts had no electricity at home.

A few conclusions can be derived from this much data:

a) Poverty is an issue that places children at risk for dropping out.
b) Students who live with their parents are less likely to drop out of school than those who live in dormitories.
c)Parents who are employed are less likely to have children who drop out of school.
d) Parental encouragement is a powerful force in keeping students in school.

It would be easy to put the whole responsibility on parents. However, the most devoted parents lack information that might otherwise inform their sensitivity with vision and concreteness, that could help them assist and encourage their children. They often feel disarmed before the jargon the school employs to guard the gates and reinforce the walls they maintain. Few of these parents can offer early learning opportunities to their children before they enter schools. These parents rarely can analyze the problems of the schools and of the relationship of their children to the schools. Even when they see the warning signals of future failure, they cannot propose corrective measures in a language that will win political attention or social response. Finally we can guess with a high degree of confidence that many of these students will become the parents of another generation of dropouts and illiterate children, kids who soon will enter the same schools without the reinforcement and encouragement of those many forms of parental backup so essential for developing competence.

B. THE CULTURE

1. According to the study *Navajo Students at Risk* families where traditional values and beliefs are maintained but individuals who take advantage and adjust to modern conveniences seem to have the most successful students. The extreme traditionalists as well as those who abandoned all traditions and immersed themselves in the modern style of living have the highest number of dropouts.
2. Most successful students are those proficient in both

Navajo and English. A larger proportion of dropouts used only Navajo or mostly Navajo at home.
3. The study found that exposure to English before the age of five directly correlates with staying in school.
4. A large proportion of dropouts had no electricity in their homes (more traditional).
5. According to *Navajo Students at Risk*, commitment to their traditional culture did not represent an obstacle to staying in school.
6. Fewer students ran away from bilingual/bicultural schools than from the all-English schools.

CONCLUSION: It is clear that their culture is not an impediment to school success but rather an asset. However, knowing English is key to academic success. Those who have not been exposed to it or who don't develop proficiency in that language are more likely to find themselves two or three years behind and see no realistic hope for catching up. They are strong candidates for dropping out.

Parents who don't speak English competently are most likely to be illiterate also. They can't defend their children against failures in the school or prepare them to defend themselves before the world in which they live.

Bilingual/bicultural schools are not only more likely to contribute to the overall human development of students and help prevent dropout, but they offer parents a greater realm of possibilities for their own participation in the school lives of their children and their own personal growth.

C. The Schools
1. There are 259 schools serving the Navajo students in the Navajo area. There are four types of school: contract schools, mission schools, BIA schools, and public schools.
2. The school record keeping is very poor and they find it difficult to keep track of their students as they move from one type of school to another.
3. BIA schools have the highest dropout rate (24% in 1984-85 and 28% in '85-'86). Public schools are next with 14.2% and 20.5 % for the respective years. Contract schools follow with 11.2% for 1984-85; Then come mission schools with 7.7% and 8.5% respectively.
4. In the Navajo Nation, neither the Navajo Nation nor the Navajo parents and students have any control over the school characteristics. Navajos have very little control over their schools.
5. Public schools serve the largest number of students but their funding structures and policies are dictated by the federal programs that serve Indian students and the state requirements and funding formulas.
6. BIA Schools are still governed by Federal regulations and mission schools guard their autonomy and keep the Navajos out of their policies.

COMMENTS: School characteristics will define the characteristics of the students. The distribution of power will also determine the characteristics of the school and the community. As a community, the Navajos have no control over their educational system. They can't implant an effective educational system if they are not part of it. Teaching systems that are archaic pedagogy by anyone's standards and a national social and school policy based on class division is a denial of a child's rights which creates also the syndrome of the self fulfilling prophecies that permeate our society. "Those people can't learn." Effective pedagogy has to be dialogical and empowering of those who are in the process of learning. School policies must impact knowledge, control and participation of the entire community for it to be truly effective. A school system totally controlled from above and from outside cannot be an empowering experience for any community.

D. The Students

1. Navajo dropouts have no orientation toward the future but college bound students and graduates do. However, even those who drop out have not given up on school completely. Only 8.8% had no hope or expectations about ever returning to school.
2. The overall dropout rate was averaged at 31% and that includes grades 7-11.
3. Navajo students drop out earlier than other groups. The older they are, however, the more likely they are to drop out. About 34% of the dropouts are over 18 years old who have not been able to move as well as their peers. Some Navajo children drop out at the elementary level.
4. Reasons given for dropping out: a) Bored with school; b) problems with other students; c) retained in grade due to absenteeism; d) pregnancy and marriage; e) problems with teachers; f) legal problems/ arrests, etc.; g) substance abuse; h) to help the family; i) disciplinary problems; j) academic failure; k) older than other students; l) poor transportation; m) language problems; n) medical reasons; o) work; p) other.
5. Dropouts are less likely to participate in extracurricular activities.
6. The reservation has few good roads and even fewer paved ones. Unpaved roads become impassable when rain and snow occur. Transportation difficulties are cited often as one of the disincentives for remaining in school.
7. In a survey done by the *Navajo Students at Risk* study, all dropouts in the sample had good attendance records in elementary school but unexcused absences began increasing in high school.
8. The largest proportion of dropouts are 17 years old and older.
9. Students taken to school by their parents are less likely to drop out than those who take the bus or hitchhike.
10. Excessive absenteeism results in students falling behind and eventually dropping out.
11. The number of suspension was associated with dropping

out.
12. Only 3.2% of the dropouts were employed full-time, 7.3% were employed part time.
13. There was no significant difference between males and females in the likelihood of dropping out.
14. There was a very small difference between those who dropped out and those who didn't with regard to doing homework. 88% of the dropouts rated their academic performance as average. Only 5.9% listed academic problems as a reason fro dropping out.
15. 33.2% of the dropouts interviewed reported that often or sometimes they had problems with alcohol. Only 9.7% of those who stay in school reported having problems with alcohol.
16. Alcohol problems in the family contributed to dropping out.
17. Violence against students by other students was a serious problem creating fear and a disincentive for staying in school.
18. Use of power on the part of school officials creates a repressive and alienating environment, offensive and violating of students' personal rights.
19. 36% of the dropouts had been suspended one or more times, 25.6% had been arrested, 47.9% had trouble with alcohol, and 60% had never participated in a sport team.
20. Of those who stay in school, 18.7% had experienced suspension, 14.2 % had been arrested, 18.4% had trouble with alcohol, 66% were members of a sport team.
21. The study *Navajo Students at Risk* categorized dropout students as follows:
    a) those who complain about school and quality of instruction and felt that there is little relationship between continued schooling and success in finding a job;
    b) those who leave school because of conflicts between values of the school and those of the family. Some need to take care of family members or fulfill other family obligations.
    c) Those surrounded by poverty and unemployment and who have experienced school failure because they are part of a network of people who have also dropped out.
    d) Those who have been thrown out of school for disciplinary reasons or absenteeism.

COMMENTS: The key issue appears to be alienation. To be alienated means to lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from school, family, friends, community, work, the world. Scientists and scholars have identified the most powerful factor in alienation as the circumstances in which a young person lives. Children who are caught in a conflict at home or between home and school or in school can't pay attention to learning. Once they miss out on learning they turn away or to their peers for acceptance. According to Urie Brofenbrenner, the distinguished American educator, heavy reliance on the peer group is the strongest predictor of problem behavior especially for adolescents and young adults. If adolescents do not find outlets for their energy, imagination and longings, if they don't have

healthy and constructive challenges, they will find their own challenges in the peer group related behavior that are often very unhealthy. Among these behaviors we can include poor school performance, social withdrawal or social aggression, dropping out, absenteeism from school, drinking, promiscuous sexual activity, teenage parenthood, delinquency, and so on.

Even living in the Navajo reservation, young people cannot escape the gap between poor families and the rest of the society. Poverty is very stressful. The challenges to survive take precedence over child rearing, nurturing and educational roles. We must add that the Navajo adults are also alienated and excluded from the society at large. The stress creates not only external havoc manifested in alcoholism and other adult dysfunctional behaviors but the havoc becomes internal, first for the parents and then for the children. This kind of stress carries over into the relationship between the parents, parents with their children and the family with the community. Once the parent/child relationship is disturbed, children begin to feel insecure and the door to the world of alienation is open.

If to that we add an alienating school environment with very few educational challenges, repressive school practices, undignifying treatment, absenteeism, lack of respect for one's language, violence in school and the whole host of other problems as described above, the reasons for disintegration, confusion and total alienation are clear.

There are no accommodations either through school policy or social policy to address the reality of these children and their families. Too many of these families do what is easiest because their lives demands leave them with little energy to actively involve themselves in their own growth and that of their children.

Alcoholism is a symptom of alienation, but it is also a cause of it. The complexity of the disease makes it difficult to address it both as a disease and as a symptom. It is very insidious. Yet without addressing it at its root level - alienation - the work toward eliminating the disease becomes ineffective.

The best way to counteract alienation is to build the connectedness young people, their families and the community need. The best links are between home, school, work, community, peers. A curriculum for caring is of utmost importance. Making caring an essential part of the curriculum is the key to good education in any free society.

The Female Student Picture

The Navajo study found no significant differences between the likelihood of males or females dropping out. It also found that adolescent girls who dropped out for pregnancy reasons tended to return to school. The problem of alienation affects both

genders. It is clear that the schools, the family and the community are failing in effectively socializing the children. Dropouts don't fit socially or intellectually in school. They have not been integrated in the system called schooling. But neither have their parents been integrated in the US society. The alcoholism of both adults and youth and the boredom expressed by the students prove they have not internalized the cultural atmosphere of the society or the school. They remain culturally and socially misfits in a society stratified by race, gender, income and class.

The problem of adolescent pregnancy is a gender based manifestation of the same problem and it is not exclusive of the Navajos. In 1984 there were 1511 births to teenagers ages 17 and younger in New Mexico. 145 of their babies were low birth weight infants. 42 of those 145 infants required newborn intensive care at an average cost of $19,800 per baby. The social cost is clear; the personal one is also great.

Adolescent pregnancy is a major crisis in the lives of those teenagers, even among the Navajo where grandparents and relatives assist with the care of the child. There is still a close relationship between educational attainment and early motherhood. Some people believe that young women become pregnant or purpose, to drop out of school -- proof that alienation is a strong culprit. A 1967 survey (Bacon, 1974) showed that nearly 6 of every 10 women who gave birth before age 16 achieved 8 or fewer years of schooling. Many of them are functionally illiterate. The same study found less that 2 in 100 went beyond high school. Early childbearers never catch up with their childless peers in status attainment such as education and training.

It has been demonstrated that the children of teen mothers are substantially worse academically, emotionally and socially than the children of women who have their first child after the age of 20. In a study done in 1984 (see Rose, 1986), these children admitted to drug use and about 16% admitted to at least once running away from home. More than half had repeated a grade in school and nearly half had been suspended from school in the five years prior to the interview.

Teen pregnancy is not a question of individual sexual morality, but is bound to the issues of sexism and classism in our society. It is a response through alienation to those two key issues.

Society's messages to girls about sex are contradictory. If they are involved in sex too early, they are sluts; yet they are introduced to sex through rape and incest at very young ages, usually at the hands of a trusted male family member. Television, magazines, popular music and pornography reinforce the message that sexy is the way to be.

Another conflicting message is that while being a mother too soon is not good, you can only feel fulfilled as a woman if you become a mother.

The problems we face as a society, whether they appear among the Navajos, the Hispanics in New Mexico, the Blacks in Detroit, the adults or the young, the males or the females, have their roots in fundamental power relationships. Our resistance to address this issue in terms of class and avoiding it by converting it into issues of socio-economic status will keep us struggling forever. It is not a simple matter of income and educational attainment, or of income and racial differences, it is not an issue of more social services and income transfers. It is an issue of class differences and power relationships.

General Recommendations

The concept that was originally created for the CIT WEEAP project is good and solid. For any project based on this work, we recommend the addition of the following.

1. That a carefully strategized approach be developed for this concept and that issues of transportation, choice of staff and organization be reconsidered.

2. That a mentoring system be established for girls and young women at risk for dropping out or those with whom intervention is planned.

3. That a social literacy program be created for the parents of all children at risk. The goals are to achieve proficiency in English as well as Navajo and to expand their understanding of their social reality and how to deal with it.

4. That the children at risk be identified as early as the first grade and that intervention work will begin right then.

5. That the issue of transportation be addressed for all Navajo children in the schools.

6. That the dormitory system be eliminated and the funds be used to build local schools.

7. That the Tribe work toward providing employment for all its people as a goal for the year 2010.

8. That all Navajo schools be made bilingual. During the first five years both languages should be used for instruction.

9. That an aggressive Head Start program be created for children 2 to 5 to introduce them to English before they enter school and that it include an academic readiness program.

10. That parents be encouraged to expose their children to the English language before age 5.

11. The Navajo Nation should have more control over their schools. They need to be professionalized with the same standards of the best schools in the country. School characteristics determine the characteristics of their students.

12. The Navajo people must understand that knowledge is power and their status in this society depends on the acquisition of that power.

13. That school record keeping be improved.

14. Roads and transportation improvements are a must for the development of the Navajo Nation. Then a system of public transportation run by private individuals for personal profit would help solve many of the difficulties related to this issue. In addition it would provide some job opportunities for a number of individuals.

15. The schools must create a "caring curriculum" where the emotional and social needs of students are addressed along with the academics. The use of abusive power on the part of school officials must be eliminated and a strategy to eliminate violence among students needs to be developed. A repressive, punitive and violent atmosphere in schools is a sure way of creating the fear and destroying the motivation students have. The civil and personal rights of students and of children as people must be clarified, sustained and enforced. The school has to be a safe, secure and nurturing environment if students are going to feel affirmed and connected there.

16. The Navajo Nation must form an aggressive strategy to eliminate poverty and alcoholism among its people. It must have a goal of 12th grade level for all its people by the year 2010.

17. The schools must work toward building networks between themselves, the students, the families and the community by creating programs and curricula that bring these groups together to work or share on specific issues. For example: sports seem to be one way of bringing community, school and students together. There are other means such as:

A comprehensive literacy program;
A Child Care program that is developmental in nature for all children 1 to 5;
Mentoring and advocacy systems for all children in grades 5 to 12.

18. The school curriculum has to be made relevant to the needs of the people. This does not mean eliminating science or history or any other of the disciplines but rather following a more creative and challenging approach. The students must feel integrated into the school or they can't be socialized into the system we call schooling.

Conclusion

Though there is no question that there is an issue of power relationships between the Navajo people and the larger society, there are many issues the Navajo need to address for themselves before they can effectively challenge the class structure of which they are a part. They've got to become healthy and educated people in order to have the strength to push for a higher level of development for their people and for powersharing with the rest of the society. The creation of an effective infrastucture is a must for social and economic development. So is the development of a school system that offers the best curriculum and socio-economic atmosphere possible.

The funds are there for all this. It is only a matter of realigning them, of creating new priorities, and of thinking creatively about all other options.

Though the problems face by Navajos are not too different from those faced by other minorities in New Mexico or the US, the Navajos have a better opportunity to change their circumstances. The reasons are that they have a relatively independent community compared to other groups in the nation and are more autonomous than most. Further, the Tribe is homogeneous,lives in a circumscribed region, and has more potential resources than other groups. The Navajo have a rich culture and a strong world view and value system that, if clarified and affirmed, can represent a powerful force as strong as that used by the Jews as they hung on to their traditions while incorporating themselves in the larger society.

TOWARDS A MODEL

Enough information was generated from the CIT project that we can begin to build a model of what may bring about a positive change in the relationship between rural schools and the young minority women who drop out of them. In addition to the project experience, the ideas presented here incorporate some of our anlaysis of the social issues involved. We do not pretend that the model offers a permanent solution or that it addresses root causes of the difficulty with school dropout. It does, however, present ideas of how to be effective in the next few years.

Suggestions

1. In the planning stages of the project, answer the question, "in terms of keeping dropouts in school, what are the relevant differences between young men and women in our community? What things are important to them all? " The strategies of the project should then build on these important points. For instance, in the communities around Crownpoint, it seems important that women rather than men act as counsellors for girls.

2. Treat schoolage pregnancy and parenting as one of the barriers to staying in school and plan alternative kinds of schooling to help. This includes such things as daycare for the new children and curricula that include academics, job training, and parenting skills,

3 Address the issues of alienation and why young women run away, abuse drugs and alcohol and kill themselves. In what cases is schoolage pregnancy part of this pattern?

4. Focus the project towards service, provide services that are unique, and treat young women as individuals. In this way, girls get help now but also the project is immediately justifiable to the girls' families. For example, one of the difficulties for the WEEAP staff in the Crownpoint area was wary parents and noncooperative schools. Often the problem was resolved by immediate help to an individual.

a. Do things at the "hogan level"; help individuals and reach out to them instead of them having to come to you.

b. Be persistent (politely and respectfully so) until the proper alternatives are found to ensure that the girl has an educational arrangement that is suitable for her.

c. Many difficulties can be anticipated. Use the experiences and ideas generated in similar situations (such as those listed in the references which follow) to "trouble shoot".

4. Act as a mediator and advisor between a young woman and her parents, if needed, or between the young woman and the school. sIt seems useful to have the mediator/advisor not be associated with the girl's school. In the CIT project, the mediator/advisor belonged to the another institution in the area. There may then be difficulty associated with not having immediate access to school records, etc., but the third-party advocate is also not with a system that the student may consider unhelpful.

5. Consider the bicultural, bilingual or other ways in which the project adapts to the ways of the society around it as critical to the project's success. Provide counsellors who can add to this. For this and complementarity in general, it is useful to work in a team.

6. Track the students as they transfer into new schools or change the type of thing they are doing. Keep records.

7. Build knowledge and awareness in the community about why kids drop out, how to identify kids at risk, and why early identification is important.

7. Encourage parents, schoolage or older adults, to be successful in childrearing. Teach "parenting skills", but more than that, offer adult literacy classes with child care provided if needed.

References: Privately and Publicly Distributed Resources
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR YOUNG NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN

References are given below to recent material that may be helpful in building a model. Extensive references and a literature review focused on school dropout issues of Navajos may be found in *Navajo Students at Risk* by Platero and others (1986). As they say (p.4):

> Studies specific to Indians and especially Navajo student dropouts are not readily available as there has[sic] been few studies completed and reported to date. Steinberg, Blinde, and Chan (1984) in a literature search prior to this study, reported that little is known about the characteristics or the scope of the dropout problem among language minority youth. Few studies have been conducted on Navajo language minority youth which separated the influence of non-English language background status from other pertinent factors such as socieconomic status.

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